

Advisory Council to the Division of Autism Services
Notes, May 18, 2011

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ruth Eren, Chera Gerstein, Jacqueline Kelleher, Sara Lourie, James Loomis, Kathy Marchione, Nikki Richer, Jonathan Ross, Stan Soby, Margery Stahl, Jennifer Ureta, Tricia Winter, Larry Wood

MEMBERS ABSENT: Catherine Abercrombie, Nancy Bagatell, Judy Dowd, Jan Galloway, Ann Gionet, David Daniel Klipper, Yana Razumnaya, Lois Rosenwald, Sara Reed

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: Kathy Reddington, Lori Conchado

Approval of March Minutes – Kathy Marchione moved to approve; Ruth Eren seconded; minutes approved

Introduction of New Candidates – Chera introduced prospective members Barbara Salop and Jay Kearns and asked each to speak briefly.

Medicaid Presentation - Mark Schaeffer of the Department of Social Services prepared and presented a Power Point presentation on Medicaid. The following items were noted:

- Most of the state Medicaid budget (70%) is spent on individuals with Dual-Eligibility
- Targeted Case Management (TCM) is offered by DDS and DMHAS – TCM helps consumers to live independently
- The state can apply for waivers to covers items i.e., habilitative services, respite above what we spend; this prevents individuals from entering long term facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes and saves money

The following is an overview of answers to questions developed and posed by members:

How does Medicaid coordinate with private insurers? Providers are enrolled in Medicaid services and should be able to assist with resolving issues. Individuals may also work with their case worker to resolve issues.

Who is available to assist participants in filing for benefits above and beyond those they have received from their private insurer? You should work with your case worker if one is assigned or visit a local DSS office, which is required to provide assistance/support to individuals in applying for services or re-qualification.

What mental health benefits are available to Medicaid eligible individuals? There are various services available through DMHAS, including Group Homes.

What kind of education and training is provided to Medicaid intake personnel to assist them in giving assistance to Adults with ASD who are applying for Medicaid or once approved, re-qualifying on a regular basis? There is no specific training of staff working with those on the ASD. All staff are trained to work with people with disabilities.

Update on Autism Division

Division Changes – The Governor is working on Plan A to negotiate with unions; Plan B would include layoffs. DDS has no immediate plan to replace Kathy when she leaves. Siobhan Morgan will take over supervision of staff, reviewing budgets and continue to enroll individuals as funding permits. Some functions of the division, such as the determination of eligibility will be integrated into DDS. DDS may look at DAS job descriptions to decide on the best fit for a replacement. The council may inquire if they are interested in participating in the process.

Medicaid Waiver - The Autism Waivers were unanimously approved by the Legislature. DDS continues to work with agencies to answer questions from the Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) and hope to have an approval to begin services in the fall of 2011.

Our service coordinators have been working with individuals enrolled in our program for the last two years to apply for Medicaid and prepare Special Needs Trusts. Some are interested and looking at options, others are not interested and will not be eligible once the waivers are approved.

Status of Study of Autism Services – Kathy and Jacqui are participating in a study, initiated by Judy Dowd, to provide feedback on the need for a residential treatment facility for those with ASD. The study will be conducted by UCONN. A committee was formed to review Value Options and develop questions.

Invitation to Commissioner Macy – Chera will draft a letter to Commissioner Macy inviting him to attend the September meeting.

Next Meeting Agenda Topic – Chera would like to invite Barbara Geller of DMHAS to attend the September meeting as she is very knowledgeable on housing options. The Executive Committee will develop questions for Barbara. Sara Lourie and Nikki Richer will create a list of housing options available through their departments

Attachments:

Medicaid Questions
Medicaid Power Point Presentation
Connecticut Needs Assessment

Next meeting is scheduled for September 14th